

These audio excerpts are three pieces and two narrations which reflect 13 minutes of the ensemble's program, "John Muir - University of the Wilderness", a program which in its entirety contains 90 minutes of music and narration. Please find below the transcripts of the narration, the sources for those writings, and brief descriptions of what their role is in the telling of this story.

## **THE HOLY GROUND**

- The following brief excerpt of Muir's writing comes at the end of narration about his boyhood days in Scotland before emigrating to the United States at age 11 and it precedes the piece by Gerry O'Bierne titled "The Holy Ground".

- It is drawn from Muir's: *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* - 1913

*... "Oh, the blessed enchantment of those Saturday runaways in the prime of Spring.*

*Those were my first excursions, the beginnings of lifelong wanderings"...*

## **READING NUMBER 1**

- Precedes the Aria - "The Dragon's Eye" by Ed Willett and Cheryl Leah

- From: *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf* - (1916)

- The "Dragon's Eye" reflects the anger he felt after having lost the battle to save the Hetch Hetchy Valley in California which was dammed to provide water to the San Francisco area.

*... "Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation? And what creature of all that the Lord has taken the pains to make is not essential to the completeness of that unit - the cosmos? The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge. From the dust of the earth, from the common elementary fund, the Creator has made Homo sapiens. From the same material he has made every other creature, however noxious and insignificant to us. They are earth-born companions and our fellow mortals.... This star, our own good earth, made many a successful journey around the heavens ere man was made, and whole kingdoms of creatures enjoyed existence and returned to dust ere man appeared to claim them. After human beings have also played their part in Creation's plan, they too may disappear without any general burning or extraordinary commotion whatever..."*

## **THE DRAGON'S EYE**

- The following narration is contained within the Aria "The Dragon's Eye"

- From: John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir (1938) – also from: The Yosemite - 1912

*... "These temple-destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar. Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man. Most people are on the world, not in it, have no conscious sympathy or relationship to anything about them - undiffused, separate, and rigidly alone like marbles of polished stone, touching but separate..."*

## **READING NUMBER 2**

- Precedes the piece "Night Steps Softly" by Ed Willett and Cheryl Leah

- From: The National Parks and Forest Reservations, in a speech by John Muir to the Sierra Club

"proceedings of the meeting of the Sierra Club on November 23. 1895" – published in the Sierra Club Bulletin in 1896

*... "The battle we have fought, and are still fighting for the forests is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it. ... So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for..."*

## **NIGHT STEPS SOFTLY**

- "Night Steps Softly" is placed in our performance as a point of repose and relief as Muir and his climbing partner, Jerome Fey, have reached their camp after a harrowing mountain expedition on Mount Shasta, and are finally safe.